



Official Opposition • l'Opposition officielle

Ontario NDP Caucus • Groupe parlementaire du NPD de l'Ontario

Premier Doug Ford
Premier's Office
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

April 1, 2020

Dear Premier Ford,

I am writing to request a review of the industries and businesses currently exempted from the emergency management orders to cease operation.

In particular I would like you to review the blanket exemption for construction, an industry in which it's often impossible to practice safe distancing. Protecting workers' health and safety, and ensuring we're doing every practical thing possible to stop the spread of COVID-19, must be Ontario's priority right now. I ask you to look seriously at limiting construction activity to emergency and essential work only.

Ontario has included some services and businesses on their list of essential services that other provinces have not. In Quebec, car dealerships have been ordered to close, except as necessary for maintenance and repair; and construction, except as required for provision of emergency services, has been ordered to stop.

On Wednesday, the City of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Eileen De Villa, said there is a need to "... reduce the number of open workplaces and businesses. To be clear, it's not within my jurisdiction as the local medical officer of health to make determinations as to what businesses remain open, but I assure you we are working here at the city of actively engage our provincial partners to see what can be done to reduce the number of open workplaces and businesses so as to reduce the spread, while at the same time meeting essential needs."

Now, more than ever, precaution can save lives and we must not hesitate to take whatever steps are needed to slow the spread of COVID-19. I urge you to conduct an immediate review of the list of essential services to ensure that Ontario is doing everything we can to protect vulnerable citizens and prevent infection.

I further urge you to work with the federal government to ensure affected businesses can access wage subsidies and other support for affected workers, and to provide provincial wage support where federal initiatives fall short of what is needed for people and businesses to keep their heads above water.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Horwath".

Andrea Horwath
Leader of the Official Opposition

Ontario NDP Caucus Services

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